

Bugs in Paradise

by Mark Yokoyama



**From the canopy up high
Down to the forest floor
Are many little, living things
To find when you explore.**

**Creatures living out their lives
Perhaps not seen before,
Crawling, climbing everywhere
On, say, six legs or more.**

**Let us go into the trees,
So shady, cool and nice
And meet the creepy, crawly things
These bugs in paradise.**





**The stick insect looks like a stick
And may be brown or green.
Walking slowly in the night
They try to not be seen.**

**Their guise is quite a clever trick
When all is said and done,
'Cause who would like to eat a stick?
Basically, no one.**



**In the forest you may see
The Hammock Skipper hides
Never on the tops of leaves
But on the undersides.**

**The skipper's caterpillar
Is a strange thing to behold.
A machine made just for eating things,
If the truth be told.**

**Its girth could be called generous,
Its table manners? Rude.
It rolls itself inside a leaf
And lives inside its food!**



**Deadly is the ambush bug,
Arms lined with gripping spines
To grab and hold its insect prey
All helpless while it dines**

**By sticking in its pointy beak
And sucking what's inside
Until there's just an empty shell,
That's now unoccupied.**



**This stink bug is orange and green
And has a tiny head.
It can't defend itself with strength
It makes a smell instead!**



The jumping spider's biggest eyes
Are facing to the front
To judge the distance of its prey
And how far it must jump.

It doesn't build a spider web
To trap what it will eat.
It hunts more like a lion does,
With twice as many feet.



**After living underground,
Sometimes for many years,
The cicada larva surfaces
To change how it appears.**

**From its digging, crawling form
To an adult that sings
It makes a transformation
Complete with four new wings.**

**It leaves a bit of what it was
Out drying in the sun
The shell of what it used to be:
Its exoskeleton.**



**Behold the pseudoscorpion,
How fearsome it appears!
Though it has no bite or sting
Those pincers do look fierce.**

**It could be a scary beast
If it weren't so small,
Much smaller than a grain of rice—
It's not so big at all!**



**Growing up inside a tree
And eating only wood
May leave the longhorn beetle craving
Something that tastes good.**

**Perhaps that's why they can be found,
It's almost guaranteed,
Feeding on the fallen fruit
Beneath the mango tree.**



**Flat just like a pancake
And quick to disappear,
This spider's named Soualiga,
'Cause it lives only here.**



**This big and brightly-colored wasp,
So peaceful on the flowers,
Fiercely hunts tarantulas
Her babies will devour.**




**If I were a spider
And you a caterpillar
I might try looking like a branch
Although I am a killer.**

**And if you were a caterpillar,
You might get much thinner
If I were a spider
And I made you my dinner.**



**This bug is green, shaped like the leaves
On which he has been chewing.
That's how he hides from hungry birds
Who always are pursuing.**





**"Nocturnal is my nature,
The nighttime hours I keep,
So for the day, I find a hole
Where I can hide and sleep**

**Without a care for predators
That pester or perturb.
So if you find my hiding spot
I ask, please, don't disturb!"**


Looking almost like a bee
Is handy for a fly—
A thing that we call mimicry,
Like an undercover spy.

But why would one thing want to look
Just like it was another?
Resembling a thing that stings
Means predators won't bother.



**Stilt-legged flies have long, long legs
They're often found on poo.
And if I stood where these flies stand
Well, I'd want long legs, too.**



A close-up photograph of a bagworm caterpillar on a green plant stem. The caterpillar is covered in a brown, textured, cone-shaped protective case made of plant material. Its head, which has black and white stripes, is visible at the top of the case. The caterpillar is positioned on a green, needle-like plant stem, with other similar stems visible in the background.

**The bagworm caterpillar,
Wherever it may roam,
Always has a place to stay—
It wears its homemade home.**

The tortoise bug looks like a jewel
With glinting, golden skin.
Its back is also like a shield,
Protecting what's within.

It holds its shell down to the leaf
To which it tightly clings,
So there's no space to get in there
For ants or anything.



**"Could I look more like a leaf?"
A moth might ask itself.
In this case, I'd say probably not,
It's camouflaged so well.**

**It is a common strategy
For creatures of this size,
To hide if they can't fight,
But they'd best have a great disguise.**



**This butterfly I'm sure you've seen,
Sometimes it's everywhere:
On the flowers, in the breeze,
A sight beyond compare.**


**Its name is the Great Southern White,
Its numbers flow and ebb.
This one made its final flight
Into a spider's web.**



**Come night, you'll hear the lullaby
The snowy cricket sings—
The gentle buzzing in the brush
It makes by rubbing wings.**

**For us, it's time for sleeping,
And dreaming once or twice,
About the creatures in the woods
The bugs in paradise.**





***Bugs in Paradise* was written by Mark Yokoyama. All photos were taken by the author in the forests of Pic Paradis on St. Martin. This ebook was created by Les Fruits de Mer to accompany their 2015 Birds & Bugs wildlife event.**

Birds & Bugs is a free, public Wildlife Discovery Event created by Les Fruits de Mer, where St. Martin residents and visitors of all ages can see and learn about the amazing birds and invertebrates living in the broadleaf forest. The event will include birding tours of the forest guided by experts, a bird banding education station by EPIC (Environmental Protection in the Caribbean), a bug discovery station, and local wildlife-themed art activities for children. Birds & Bugs 2015 is sponsored by Hotel L'Esplanade, Delta Petroleum, Buccaneer Beach Bar, St. Martin Voyages, Tri-Sport and Island Mattress.

Les Fruits de Mer is a non-profit association based in St. Martin whose core mission is to raise awareness about nature, culture, and sport. The organization carries out this mission through publications, an education program, and special public outreach events that entertain, inspire, and inform. The Association is currently accepting new member and corporate benefactor member applications on its website, <http://www.lesfruitsdemer.com>.

